

Waging Peace:
Mediation Opportunities & Obstacles
in Burundi



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Fast Facts: Burundi, Africa

- ✓ With over 6 million inhabitants, Burundi is one of the Africa's most densely populated nations.
- ✓ Country is landlocked (by Tanzania, Congo & Rwanda) & situated a few miles south of the equator.
- ✓ Size: 27,834 kilometers; Capital City: Bujumbura.
- ✓ Burundi was once part of German East Africa.
- ✓ In 1923, it was a part of a League of Nations Trust under Belgium.
- ✓ Burundi became an independent country in 1962.
- ✓ Currency is the *Burundi Franc* & the official languages are French & Kirundi.
- ✓ Tribal warfare has ravaged the country for decades, leaving the fertile land mostly underdeveloped.
- ✓ Economic strengths include coffee (80% of foreign receipts) and nickel exports.

Source: www.Worldatlas.com



Burundi, Africa

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Waging Peace:

Mediation Opportunities & Obstacles in Burundi

When attempting to dissect & dislodge truth from fiction concerning the decade-long genocide in Burundi, it seems fitting to first bear in mind a timeworn Chinese proverb:

“There are three truths:

Your truth,

the truth,

and my truth.”

And the truth(s) behind the real motivation, impetus and ongoing hostilities in Burundi are, by and large, directly dependent upon the ethnic & political allegiance – either Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, Belgian, etc. – of the respondent(s). Since October of 1993, Burundi has been embroiled in a deadly civil war characterized by armed political & ethnic confrontations. The cost has been high: approximately 300,000 people have been killed and some 800,000 displaced as refugees.

A landlocked dollop of land in central Africa, Burundi faces several critical political, geographical and economic challenges:

- Scarcity of resources coupled with very low government tax base.
- With over six million inhabitants on 27,834 kilometers – it’s one of the poorest & most densely populated countries on earth.
- Half of its population is under 15 years old & 80% are living below UN poverty levels (Jackson, p7).
- Adult literacy levels are under 36% (Jackson, p9).
- Over 25% of all primary schools have been destroyed, while international donors cut aid to education by over 70% in the past decade (Jackson, p9).

- Due to the country's prolonged tribal warfare, the majority of fertile land remains uncultivated & underdeveloped.
- The country continues to rank second only to Rwanda as a blood-drenched nation, subject to recurring bouts of ethnic genocide. Though its ethnic dichotomies are less extreme, Burundi is sometimes referred to as Rwanda's "false twin" (Weissman, p5).
- Burundi's conflict places much of Central Africa at risk and "erodes the international norm against genocide" (Weissman, pxi).
- Due to a "strong coalescence of interests" Hutus & Tutsis in Burundi, Rwanda & Congo launch cross-border raids & attacks (LeMarchand, pxxii). Ethnic unrest spills out across borders.
- Due to small size, negligible economic impact & geographic remoteness, suffers from low priority and general indifference on the diplomatic agenda of U.S. & European policymakers.
- Geostrategically unimportant relative to its surrounding countries & world at large. So Burundi's conflict "remains neglected in terms of in-depth analyses and news reports" (Griggs, 1997).
- Profound power imbalance between the two tribes.
- No direct shipping & ocean source – landlocked.
- Plus numerous "sub-conflicts" have arisen around issues concerning family, property, education, succession & descent.

Certainly, Rene' LeMarchand, the recognized authority on Burundi, cut the Hutu-Tutsi meta-conflict down to three core disagreements (LeMarchand, p17):

- The significance of ethnicity as a source of tension;
- The nature of cultural differentiation between Hutu & Tutsi; and
- The role of history in shaping ethnic antagonisms.

LeMarchand explains that in the "collective psyche of Hutu & Tutsi, two genocides compete for recognition – and for condemnation; the 1972 genocide of the Hutu in Burundi and the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda" (pxii). And he adds that the "reciprocal demonization" of the opposing ethnic group continues to stir up suspicion, mistrust and fear of annihilation at the hands of the other (pxii). Succinctly

put: “One group seeks to vindicate the rights of the excluded majority and the other to legitimize the privileges of the ruling minority” (LeMarchand, pxxix).

On a positive note, Burundi’s tribal conflict is not based on some ancient tribal hatred, but rather on “divisive colonial policies and the post-independence struggle for power among politico-ethnic elites in a polarized and overpopulated country” (Weissman, pv). The watershed peace agreement of the Arusha (Tanzania) Peace Agreement in August of 2000 did help to lay the initial groundwork for stabilizing the region, but fell short in sustaining compliance.

The current news out of Burundi offers as much turmoil and tension as the country’s lamentable past. On the 3rd of March this year, a national poll showed that 91.2% of the three million registered voters in Burundi answered “yes” in a referendum for a new constitution that addressed, for the first time ever, several difficult issues (IRIN News, p2). The proposed new constitution addresses concerns over political power balances (60% Hutu & 40% Tutsi representation), police & army authority (an even 50/50 split), and gender inequality (a 30% women’s representation in all government institutions) (IRIN News, p2).

For the first time in 12 years, Burundi was to hold a national election in April of 2005. The election was a principal part of the peace deal to end its decade of civil war. But the process has been put on an indefinite hold as legislators battle to add last-minute amendments to the country’s electoral law, including the approval of a 30,000-person staff listing of voting station personnel (AlertNet, p1).

To no apparent avail, the third-party mediator of the election process, South African Vice President Jacob Zuma, flatly rejected any pleas for postponement (Wakabi, p1). Plus, the head of Burundi’s U.N. mission, Carolyn McAskie, said she was “shocked” at the stoppage, which she deemed a thinly veiled “way of delaying the process” (AlertNet, p1). At the time of this research, no future date had been scheduled for an upcoming election.



Mediator's Introductory Statement

"I'd like to welcome you both to this very important mediation today. My name is Roxane Richter, and I'll be your mediator. I would like to express my deepest respect and admiration to each of you for your undeniable courage in being willing to meet here today and seek a peaceful end to Burundi's longstanding civil war.

Now I would like to briefly explain the purpose of mediation, which is to help disputing groups settle their differences. This mediation can prevent the loss of additional lives and halt the progress of any further ethnic conflicts. The agreement you reach here today, once signed, will result in a binding peace agreement. Once you come to an agreement, you can quickly move beyond this dispute and start the important healing process between the two groups.

I am an impartial channel in this discussion. I'm neither a judge nor journalist. I will not take either side in this dispute. I will remain neutral. I am only here to assist you, both equitably, in working together so that the final agreement reflects, collaboratively, your needs and interests. Consider me "the peacemaker," merely assisting you two in negotiating a usable solution to currently existing problems.

It is of paramount importance that you are both willing to negotiate in good faith and willing to come to a peaceful, win-win agreement. Are you? In order to reach an accord, you will both must be willing to compromise on some matters in the agreement. Do both of you think you can participate in good faith?

I do ask that both parties listen & respect the other during the parties' statements and not interrupt the speaker until the speaker feels satisfied and is ready to hear comments from the listener. You will both have all the time you want to discuss any

disputes and/or issues – but, in order to maintain respect for everyone, I will first allow one person to make a statement, and then ask for comments from the other party. There will be no interruptions, shouting, vulgar and/or disrespectful comments allowed.

I will take notes so that you can have a complete agreement, schedule & “to-do” list after the meeting. The discussion will strictly follow our previously agreed-upon scheduling of issues (from least contentious to most contentious).

Also, we will allow for break times, and/or to meet with one or both of you individually, which is known as a caucus. Let me again repeat that everything that goes on in a caucus or this mediation is strictly confidential. All of our notes taken during our meetings will be destroyed, so you need not worry that any confidential information shared here today will leak out.”



Initial Statements by Hutu Officials & Representatives

The Hutus have many claims of incidences of violence & genocide perpetrated by the Tutsis. While these incidences have taken place over a prolonged period of time, we cannot address each and every allegation, but will attempt to merely focus on the main “points of contention” today, which include the following:

- The massive “planned annihilation” of the Hutus in 1972 by Tutsis, which killed over 200,000 innocent Hutus (LeMarchand, p100). We can never forget this massacre of our people. The Tutsis tried to “equalize the population” by slaughtering us (LeMarchand, p26). We can never stop worrying and anticipating future attacks from the Tutsis. We can never let our guard down in

case they decide to go on a rampage and slaughter us – without provocation – again.

- The invention of 1993 killing of the Tutsi, which was a trumped-up fabrication perpetuated by the Tutsis.
- All of the Tutsis – from Zaire, Uganda and Rwanda – are making an alliance and organizing themselves (Griggs, p1) to dominate & kill us so they can geostrategically place & control a transport route across Lake Tanganyika and into the vital & flourishing South African rail network.
- We are the majority & should, obviously, hold the majority's rule. We constitute 85% of the population. Still, we have had to bow down to Tutsi rule (even though they are only 10 %!) since our independence from Belgium in 1962 (IRIN News, p2).
- True equality & democracy is based on demographic, not socio-political, majorities. We can only gain equitable educational, economic and political opportunities if we, as the overwhelming demographic majority, are first given equal access to education & jobs. We are powerless – at the mercy of the minority rule of the Tutsis.
- In 1972, there were restrictions placed on the number of Hutu children allowed into secondary schools (LeMarchand, p164). So now only a tiny fraction of Hutus had the required skills for upper level employment. For instance, in our Urban Development ministry, 92% of the personnel are Tutsi (LeMarchand, p166). On average, each ministry headed by a Tutsi claims an 88% + of Tutsi personnel, but not one ministry headed by a Hutu claimed less than 46% Tutsi personnel (LeMarchand, p166).
- In July of 1996, the Tutsi military waged a full-scale military takeover.



Initial Statements by Tutsi Officials & Representatives

For our group, the Tutsi, the Hutu-Tutsi conflict revolves around all-too frequent claims of torture, abuse and bloodthirsty killings of innocent members of our tribe at the hands of the Hutus. While these incidences have taken place over a decade, we obviously cannot address each and every allegation, but will rather try to focus on the core points of conflict, which include the following:

- The April 1994 genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda clearly shows that we are under attack from the Hutus on all sides; even across our borders we can find no safe haven. As a group, we are not protected in any country and our people are refugees fleeing genocide in Rwanda, Congo & Burundi.
- You see, the massacre of our people continues every day. For example, on Aug. 14, 2004, in less than two hours, some 160 Congolese Tutsis were massacred in the Gatumba refugee camp in Burundi (Abbott, p8). The victims were mostly women and children, who did nothing; they were only fleeing the fighting in their own homeland. The blood is on the hands of the Hutu Rebel Forces, who claimed responsibility for the massacre.
- We must be ever vigilant in protecting ourselves, as we are the ethnic minority. Every day, we must face a horrible inequality – If you consider of the 13 million people in Rwanda and Burundi, for every *one* Tutsi, there are *six million* Hutus. We cannot risk our numbers being further decimated or being annihilated.
- We hold the overwhelming majority of educated government & corporate jobs. We are the only qualified & educated applicants for these lucrative jobs. True democracy & equality is based on social, economic & political – not demographic – majorities.

- In anticipation of a bloodbath surrounding the (now postponed) April 2005 election, some 4,000 Tutsis have fled into Rwanda since December of last year (Nduwimana, p1). We fear new elections because many Tutsis were persecuted & killed by Hutus during the 1993 elections, after the assassination of the elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye at the hands of Tutsi officers (Nduwimana, p2). If it happened before, it could easily happen again.
- The Hutu extremists are bloodthirsty & trying to exterminate us as a group. Between April & July of 1994 alone, Hutu extremists killed 800,000 Tutsis (and some moderate Hutus) in our country and our neighbor, Rwanda (Karkabi, p2). We are one united tribe; all Tutsis, whether they are Congolese, Rwandan or Burundian, are Tutsi. We must protect ourselves.
- Status, not ethnicity, is the principal determinant of rank and privilege. We have risen to the top; the Hutu & Twa are clearly at the bottom of the heap. Even the Kirundi tem “*Hutu*,” literally translated means “social subordinate” or “slave” (LeMarchand, p10).
- We are tall, thin & graceful pastoralists & own the cattle in Burundi. Our women are renowned for their beauty, so every Hutu wishes for a Tutsi wife. The Hutus are short & stocky and poorly educated farmers. They want to marry our attractive Tutsi women, so over many decades, they have become indebted to us.



Separating Underlying Interests – Getting at Root Interests

Questions such as: “What are your top priorities from a peace agreement?” and, “What are some things you might be more likely to compromise on than others?”

and, “What motivates you for participating in these talks today?” and, “What are some things that you’d like for the other party to better understand about your needs/desires that you think have been misunderstood/misconstrued?”

(Simplified) Probable Hutu Interests:

- ❑ A more equitable share of opportunities in education & jobs.
- ❑ The removal of Hutu schoolchildren quotas in secondary schooling.
- ❑ A more equitable voice in government ministry offices & affairs.
- ❑ Assurances & safety from Tutsi-led discrimination & violence.

(Simplified) Probable Tutsi interests:

- ❑ Assurances that, as a minority, they will not be annihilated.
- ❑ An equitable “power sharing” agreement, not a complete loss of control to the ill-educated agricultural minorities, who are sorely ill equipped to lead the country’s corporate & government initiatives.
- ❑ Assurances & safety from Hutu-led discrimination & violence.



Mutually Acceptable Standards & Need for Objective Expertise

First & foremost, mutually acceptable standards might include the complete cessation of any & all violence – this includes kidnapping, persecution, abuse, torture, police brutality, murder, etc. – any human rights violations whatsoever. Also, we will implement the mutually acceptable standard of an immediate cessation of discrimination – which includes any & all discriminatory educational, occupational, political, social or economical practices.

Clearly, there is a need for objective and neutral third-party expertise in this conflict. We will bring in peace-building experts from the U.N. and Africa (chiefly Tanzania & South Africa), but also objective “peacemaking” experts from institutes in Sweden, Holland and other countries (who have no vested political or economic interest in the resolution’s outcome). Also, we will seek assistance from peace-building NGOs who have already been (somewhat) successful in peace initiatives, such as Search for Common Ground, Community of Saint ‘Egidio, Organization for African Unity, etc.



BATNAS - Best Alternatives to a Negotiated Agreement

- ❑ Parties could segregate – form separate “homelands” for each tribe;
- ❑ Parties could seek formal charges against each other through the U.N. (or other group) for violations of human rights (murder, torture, etc.);
- ❑ Parties could seek formal criminal & civil court charges & cases against each other for kidnapping, murder, abuses, torture, discrimination, etc.;
- ❑ Government and/or “outside” (U.N., alliances, etc.) authorities could impose fines, criminal & civil charges, and restitutions for abuses;
- ❑ Rwanda & Burundi could be placed under a U.N.-imposed and -sanctioned “trusteeship authority” and fall under the authority & cease-fire control of others;
- ❑ An imposed renegotiation of political borders & a more “equitable” redistribution of natural resources in several Central African countries (Griggs, p9) by a coalition of countries and/or the U.N.




Innovative Strategies & Solutions for a Lasting Peace in Burundi: Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management & Conflict Resolution

According to the Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, interethnic conflict “has become a central characteristic of the Post-Cold War era as many groups and leaders around the world have turned to ethnicity as the answer to the dilemmas of identity” (Melone, p1). The handbook points out three factors that are generally argued to be the main causes of ethnic conflict (Costy & Gilbert, p12):

- Structural Factors – economic, social, and political issues relating to wealth distribution and interethnic relations;
- Facilitating Factors – the degree of politicization & ethnic consciousness;
- Triggering Factors – includes sharp economic shock, sudden escalation of inter-group tension, or the collapse of central authority.

* Please Note: For the sake of organization and brevity, I will first address any past initiatives made in the specified areas (third-party agents, women, youth, incentives, media, etc.), and then address any of *my own creative solutions* under the heading:

“  New & additional steps that could be taken include: ”

If my research found no previous initiatives under the specified area, no historical precedence(s) for the solution, then there will only be my personal commentary under the aforementioned “New & additional steps...” creative solutions heading.



Using Neutral Third-Party Agents

Considering the prolonged length of time and the huge cost in human lives, the Burundian conflict has had numerous outside & neutral third-party agents and NGOs attempt to reach peace agreements between the Hutus and Tutsis. Some of them are/have been:

- Great Lakes Policy Forum (Jan. 1995) & European Forum;
- Several organizations (Search for Common Ground, catholic church, Refugees Int., Johns Hopkins Univ., etc.) worked on peace agreements;
- Arusha Peace Agreement (August 2000) – Officials from Tanzania & South Africa helped to lay groundwork for stabilizing region (Maundi, p2).



New & additional steps that could be taken include:

This area seems to be the most saturated with historical past efforts. Numerous organizations and governments, too numerous to list; have attempted to mediate peace accords. If there is any “untouched” opportunity, it seemingly lies with the participation of large, power-wielding Western nation’s diplomatic policies and efforts (U.S, France, U.K. etc). When peace agreements and/or any economic sanctions have been put in place, their proverbial “Achilles’ heel” has been the lack of cooperation & support from Western nations.



Using the Media: Independent Radio, Journalism & Media Outlets

While media can serve to escalate tension and conflict in interethnic battles, it can also defuse tensions, playing a positive role in conflict management and

resolution by “counterbalancing the negative effects and and/or reversing the damage that has already been done” (Melone, 2002, p1). According to the Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, media has a “large potential for *creating a common basis* and thus cultivating conditions for conflict resolution” and they can serve three main functions:

- An Informing & education function;
- Build confidence & mediate between conflicting parties by fostering communication, generating alternatives to violence & reflecting the average person’s desire & need for peace; and
- Act as a watchdog on leaders for long-term accountability, monitor human rights violations & provide early warnings on escalating violence.

The handbook also points out that the media in conflict-ridden countries “often play a significant role in creating and furthering both facilitating & triggering factors, for example by utilizing oppositional metaphors (‘us’ vs. ‘them’) linked to internal and external issues or threats facing the nation.”

Considering the high illiteracy rate, radio has an especially strong voice in Burundi. About 80% of Burundians are Hutu peasants from the countryside and don’t own televisions, so “talking heads on TV” are “far removed from the average person’s daily life” (Melone, p7). For instance, in 2003, Radio Insanganiro launched a radio program called “I’m Sorry,” in which people phone in or write to apologize for non-peaceful ethnic actions they now regret (SCFG, p2).



New & additional steps that could be taken include:

↑The media could be better trained – by NGOs or media (radio, TV, print) organizations – in using more passive, non-aggressive and peace-building talk.



Using a Public Forum: Seeking the Public’s Pardon

On March 25, 2004, more than a thousand people got together for Public Pardon & Reconciliation Day at the Nyamurenza Commune in Ngozi Province,

Burundi. The event, organized by the Women's Peace Centre of Search for Common Ground (SFCG), allowed people to publicly admit to crimes they had committed against their neighbors and ask their forgiveness – in public (SFCG, pg1). The people who admitted their crimes had white handkerchiefs tied around their necks, received hugs, and then drank from a communal pot of traditional beer – the symbol of reconciliation in Burundi, according to SFCG.



New & additional steps that could be taken include:

↑ Much like South Africa, there could be a Truth & Reconciliation Commission put in place, where people could admit their wrongdoings and find public clemency if they divulged all of their participation in violent ethnic action(s).



Using Shame: Remorse & Reconciliation



New & additional steps that could be taken include:

↑ Exchanges between victim & perpetrator could be carried out privately.

↑ A Truth & Reconciliation Commission could be put in place, where people could admit their wrongdoings and receive public clemency if they divulged all of their participation in violent ethnic action(s).



Using Integration: Socializing, Eating & Working Together

One of the cleverest initiatives I found was a Quaker-led project in the small village of Kibimba. Tragically, Kibimba gained worldwide notoriety when in August of 1993, 77 schoolchildren were burned alive (Ningbabria, p1). In 1995, the Quaker Peace Committee reopened the hospital in Kibimba with a restaurant so that people could meet & eat on the hospital grounds. (A foreigner had to cook & manage the restaurant, as villagers feared being poisoned by the opposing group.) Over a period of time, people began to trust the restaurant, and eventually, that trust transferred to the hospital (Ningbabria, p1).



New & additional steps that could be taken include:

Initiatives like the one in Kibimba are basic, but very critical, in getting Hutus and Tutsis communicating directly with one another. The provision of having neutral third-party expatriates or foreigners “clear the path” is a good proviso. This can lend an initial sense of safety and security to these meetings. Initiatives can move into other facilities & events, such as lectures, trauma healing training, dances, music festivals, entertainment, etc.



Using Politics: 50/50 Coalition Government



New steps that could be taken include:

The proposed new constitution sets political power balances at 60% Hutu & 40% Tutsi representation, but the Tutsis are not likely to be pleased with their

(perceived) initial and immediate loss of control/hegemony. Perhaps an initial 50/50 power share could be coupled with a progressive “sliding scale” of a coalition government, which could allow for a more gradual succession of Hutu power-sharing over some set time period (3-5 years). This would allow the Hutus some much-needed time for boosting their education & skills training as well.



Using Peace Education: Teaching & Reaching the Littlest Citizen



New & additional steps that could be taken include:

↑ One idea could be using peer mediation in the classroom, allowing an equal number of Tutsi/Hutu “Peer Mediators” for each new day/week. Peer mediators would be trained in Alternatives to Violence Solutions and peace building.



Using Encouragement: Recognizing Peace Heroes

Since September of 1994, a weekly radio program entitled “Inkingi y’ ubuntu” (“Pillars of Community” in Kirundi) has highlighted stories of local Burundians who risked their lives to help members of a different ethnic group (Search for Common Ground, 2005, p3). The studio also hosted a national “Heroes Summit” in April of 2004, which was a three-day event honoring local community members who chose a peaceful alternative to violence and assisted a fellow Burundian from a different ethnic background.



New & additional steps that could be taken include:

↑ Everyday “peace heroes” could receive some fiscal compensation or a stipend (such as a voucher for free government eggs, milk, etc.), or get recognition in

a media outlet, or get to meet with some top government official, or the president, in a ceremony of recognition.



Using Training: Trauma Healing, Peace Building & Alternatives to Violence Training

Historically, Quakers were among the first groups to work on reconciliation in Burundi. They have a Quaker Peace Center in South Africa that trains victims in trauma healing, peace building and alternatives to violence training (Karkabi, p2). The coordinator of the Friends Peace Team African Great Lakes Initiative for Trauma Healing & Nonviolence Training, Adrien Niyongabo, said that participants are trained in three-day workshops to sit in a circle and communicate their stories of trauma & violence: “Sitting in a circle has a big significance in Burundi. It’s like a family sitting around and waiting for the food to be ready... At the end of the workshop, the people are joyful. You see Hutus and Tutsis sitting together and sharing how things are going in the countryside and how they can get back to cultivating the land. I think we are really making a difference.”



Using Women: Women as Peacemakers

In 2001, Search for Common Ground opened the Women’s Peace Centre in Burundi’s capital, Bujumbura. Since then, Tutsi and Hutu women have held “Positive Solidarity Days,” events where an equal number of Tutsi & Hutu women bring gifts, meet, dance and talk about how they can help bring peace to their nation (SFCG, p1).



New & additional steps that could be taken include:

Women could try to take a more active role in peace building, such as bringing their young children to participate in peace education workshops, organizing sit-ins, marches, inter-ethnic dances, women-led mediation sessions, etc. Clearly, the “socially acceptable” cultural role of women in Burundi must be taken into account, so there might be some parameters that need to be taken into consideration.



Using Traditional Peacemakers: the Bashingantahe

In order to be successful, any solution to the conflict in Burundi must take into consideration the traditional (historical) tribal roles and cultural customs. In my opinion, the revival of the Bashingantahe – an organized group of men (who acted as rural peacekeepers for two centuries, up until colonial times) and who were chosen on the basis of their “sense of truth, justice and responsibility for the overall good” of the people of Burundi – would be a win-win situation for bringing about conciliation & arbitration in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict.

Though the role of the Bashingantahe was weakened in Colonial times (due to the influx of missionaries & civil courts), many Burundians still wish for the order of the Bashingantahe to be restored (Nindorera, 2002, p2).

In Burundian tradition, the role of the Bashingantahe was:

- ❑ To settle disputes, by conciliation or judgment;
- ❑ To reconcile individuals and families;
- ❑ To authenticate contracts;
- ❑ To oversee the maintenance of justice;
- ❑ To ensure the security of life & property
- ❑ To provide guidance & balance to politicians in the exercise of their mandates; and, finally,
- ❑ To emphasize respect for human rights and the common good, whenever the need arose.

Source: Nindorera, 2002, p1

↗ New & additional steps that could be taken include:

↑ The modern day revival of the Bashingantahe as a voluntary, community-led initiative to serve as an official and binding “moral authority” could play a very important role in rural-based peace solutions.



Using At-Risk Populations: Youth Projects

After assessing that many of the “pro-peace” radio shows in Burundi were, by and large, being ignored by the most violent group of citizens – youth (with teenage boys in particular) – steps were taken to make radio shows more appealing to young people. The NGO Common Ground (CG) realized that the youth were desperate for entertainment, especially in the refugee camps, and added music and kid-targeted interviews & content (Melone, p12). Today, UNICEF & CG have a huge audience in this critical conflict management market.

↗ New & additional steps that could be taken include:

While clearly one of the most volatile areas, it also seems to be one of the least confronted arenas of peacekeeping efforts. As a result of political manipulation & sheer boredom (lack of entertainment coupled with a dangerous void of viable employment and education), youth are extremely susceptible to being influenced into participating in violent actions. Perhaps venues like sports events and music/rock concerts that publicized peace-building initiatives would offer new opportunities. Also, Public Service Announcements (PSA) and concerts by popular & well-liked musicians/entertainers might help. Additionally, there are many positive youth-

focused entertainment groups (Christian and other) could serve to build up young people's self esteem and serve in positive role modeling behaviors.



Using Sanctions: Hitting the Economy

↗ New steps that could be taken include:

While Tanzania did invoke economic sanctions against the Burundian government, they largely failed due to lack of sufficient Western (namely U.S. & France) support (Weissman, pxi). In order for economic sanctions to take effect, such as the success of sanctions against RSA's Apartheid, all critical economic Western "powerhouses" must participate.



Using Incentives: Rewards & Opportunities

↗ New steps that could be taken include:

□ *Business & Tax Incentives for Hiring Across Ethnic Lines* – This idea is based on reaching business people where they live – their financial bottom line. Businesses would be granted tax incentives if they hit (some specified, 60%- 39% - 1%) "equitable" quota of Hutu/Tutsi/Twa employees. This incentive would boost national and international businesses' bottom line if they complied. Plus, you could impose fines/taxes on any businesses that refused to comply, thereby increasing the funds coming into the government & tax offices for education, infrastructure development & health.

□ *Rewards for Local/Rural & Refugee Camp Peace Initiatives* – This would be an individual-based reward for refugees & rural people who attend some specified

Alternative to Violence training, trauma healing, etc. and adhere to peace local initiatives. They could be rewarded with a stipend of basic necessities: eggs, seeds, milk, etc. This would positively affect rural areas & refugee camps, and reward peaceful individual behavior.

□ Mandatory Equitable Ethnic Government & City Hiring Policies & Quotas–

These policies would be based on some specified (say, 60%- 39% - 1%) “equitable” quota of Hutu/Tutsi/Twa government & city employees. This mandatory compliance would necessitate compliance. Plus, you could impose fines/taxes on any government manager/city manager that was found not in compliance, thereby increasing the funds coming into the government & tax offices for education, infrastructure development & health.

□ Tangible Incentives for Increasing Educational Level & Opportunities for

Minorities – Individualized incentives, such as chalkboards, books, computers, laboratory equipment, etc. could be used & given to schools that meet and/or exceed specified educational standards. Additionally, higher-education scholarships could be granted specifically to an “equitable” share of students from each of the three ethnic groups who can prove their compliance and community activism in peace initiatives.

□ Community Rewards to Areas that Adhere to Nonviolence & Set Cease-Fire

Agreements – Communities who have no participation in violent activities and who organize peace centers, trauma healing workshops, etc. could receive “collective” community rewards – such as a new/upgraded sewer system, clinic, electric generator, etc. This would positively “hit the wallet” of poor communities, plus hold members in entire communities/villages accountable to one another.

□ Homestead Act Based on Compliance with Peace Initiatives – This idea

would be a national initiative that would allow for a free homestead (some specified

amount of land – an average small homestead parcel of usable land) to any family that does not participate in ethnic fighting. There could be set time period (say, 5-10 years) and all members of the family (to be specified – perhaps spouses, children & grandchildren) would have to prove they had not participated in any ethnic unrest/violent activities. This would positively “hit the wallet” of poor families, plus hold family members accountable to each other.

□ Education Act Based on Compliance with Peace Initiatives – This idea would be a national initiative that would allow for free primary & secondary education to families that do not participate in ethnic fighting. There could be set time period (say, 2-4 years) and a specified limit of children (per family) that would be eligible. This would positively “hit the wallet” of poor families, plus hold family members accountable to each other. Additionally, higher-education scholarships could be sponsored (by NGOs, corporations, individuals, government agencies, etc.) & granted specifically to students who prove their compliance and community activism in peace initiatives.



Addressing the Power Imbalance

Clearly, the gross imbalance of power sharing in Burundi is one of the key issues of conflict. It's imperative that any new coalition government address any & all of the aforementioned economic (stratification of wealth along tribal lines), social (education, status) and political (equitable voice & representation) issues relating to wealth distribution and interethnic relations. There must also be a more equitable share of opportunities in education & jobs (Hutus), the removal of barriers in secondary schooling, an equitable power sharing in government & police affairs, and

finally, government-imposed guarantees & safety from ethnic-based discrimination (imposed fines, employment quotas, etc.).



Conclusion

In conclusion, any long-term agreement in Burundi must, at the very least, equitably address core concerns in: (1.) power sharing, (2.) the “collective” fear & mistrust between the tribes and (3.) safety – border immunity if you will – from unrest spilling over from its neighboring countries of Congo & Rwanda. None of these are short-term issues, but concerns that will involve the assistance & guidance of neutral third-party peacemakers, perhaps even impartial outside military forces. When we consider that the primal center & core substance of politics is “a question of who gets what where and when,” Burundi’s economy & livelihood is, for better or worse, intrinsically and eternally tied to its politics (Oketch, p85).

As Mark Twain so aptly put it: “The very ink with which history is written is fluid prejudice,” and, certainly, Burundi is no exception. Let us hope that the bloody past history of Burundi –filled with prejudice, mistrust and fear – might be erased, and the future penned in the ink of trust, peace and hope.

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